Experimental Physics Investigators: Frequently Asked Questions

GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION

How do I apply for the investigator award?
We have a website where you can submit your application. You can also find the link and more information on moore.org under the Experimental Physics Investigators Initiative. Any additional questions can be directed to epi@moore.org.

When is the deadline to apply?
The deadline has passed for this round. We expect to open applications in fall 2022 for our next round of funding. Please sign up on our mailing list to receive notifications for subsequent offerings.

Will it be an open application or a nomination process?
It will be an open application process.

What are the criteria needed to apply?
Investigators must be conducting experimental physics research and have earned tenure (or equivalent) at their U.S. institution and be within four years of that appointment at the time of application. (*For the 2022 application deadline, this means applicants must have earned tenure after January 14, 2018, or January 14, 2017 if you are applying for an extension.*) The department will be asked to limit service requirements of the principal investigator (e.g., service on committees) and some teaching buyout is allowed, yet we expect that the successful grantee will teach and advise students.

I am working in biophysics. Am I eligible?
Our aim is to not only support experimental physics but to provide opportunities to spur collaboration in and among our awardees. We will be hosting an annual gathering of grantees to further this goal and consequently are limiting the sub-fields to those that are aligned closely enough to enable cross-fertilization of new ideas or advance new collaborative projects. The fields we are primarily considering include atomic/molecular/optical physics, biophysics, chemical physics, condensed matter, fluid dynamics, geophysics, laser physics, materials, polymer physics, plasma physics, precision measurements, quantum information, soft matter physics, as well as detector and novel experimental design work in astrophysics/astronomy, exotic matter searches, fusion, gravitational physics, and nuclear physics.

I am a computational physicist. Am I eligible?
This program is specifically designed to support experimental physics researchers. Theoretical and computational work is not supported unless part of your larger experimental research efforts.

I work in experimental high energy physics. Am I eligible?
We will not be supporting ongoing work of large collaborations. Individuals working in these fields (e.g., astrophysics/astronomy, exotic matter searches, fusion, gravitational physics, high energy physics, nuclear physics) would be eligible if they are considering novel detector designs or other approaches that might pave the way to fundamentally new discoveries.

I am based at a company. Am I eligible?
The grants will be made to the nonprofit or public university or research institutions where the investigator is based. We will not be making grants to for-profit organizations.

What are you not supporting?
Other than what was mentioned previously in theoretical/computational physics and ongoing large-scale collaborations, we are also not supporting education research or public engagement.

I work closely with another eligible person. Can we apply as a team?
Each award will be given to a single institution, with one principal investigator. You can discuss the collaborative nature of the work in your application but need to choose one person to represent the partnership. If the partnership spans different institutions, the institution to which the award is made will need to create a subaward to redirect funds appropriately. Partnerships with national labs are allowed.

How will investigators be selected?
Selection of experimental physics investigators uses a two-stage process. In the first stage, we invited individuals from U.S. institutions to submit pre-proposals. Pre-proposals included CV information, current and pending support, and a short essay on proposed research directions. Demographic information was not provided to reviewers and in addition we asked all applicants to write research summaries without identifying information.

In the second stage, a subset of applicants is being invited to submit a more extensive research proposal, an engagement plan that describes how they are creating equitable and inclusive research groups and advancing these issues in their department and university, a budget, a letter from the department chair outlining the applicant's engagement with the department along with service and teaching loads, a description of roles of members of the research team, a facilities and equipment description, and a recommended list of reviewers (suggested and excluded with rationale). Applicants working in large collaborations are being asked for a letter explaining how the proposed work informs and interacts with existing work. CV information is carried forward from the pre-proposal but may allow for some updates or more detailed information.

We have taken steps to reduce the amount of work needed to apply in each of the stages to encourage broad participation while still providing sufficient information for evaluation of individuals and their proposed work. Contributed components are required to be brief and all personal information will be entered in individual fields to place all applications on an equal standing and to allow us to redact certain information (e.g., names and identifying information) to allow a less biased review.

Applicants will be considered solely on the merits of their proposal documents and awards will be made regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, or disability.

When will I know if I've been invited to submit a full proposal?
We aim to inform all candidates of our decisions in March 2022. We anticipate providing at least six weeks between notification and the deadline for submission which will occur in mid-April.

How many investigators will be selected this year?
Our intent is to support the work of roughly 20 new principal investigators each year.

Are existing Moore Foundation grantees eligible?
Yes, subject to specific eligibility requirements of this offering.

What is the amount awarded to each investigator?
Each grant will provide $250,000 per year for five years with additional funds available for research equipment. This amount includes a 12.5% overhead allowance on eligible expenses. The grant will be made to the applicant's public or private non-profit university or research institution.

If I am selected, when can I expect the grant to be finalized?
We anticipate final approval of funds by early fall 2022.

I had a life event (childbirth in my case) following tenure which slowed progress in my research. Are there any allowances for this?
You may optionally request a 1-year extension to the eligibility criteria (receiving tenure within the past four years) owing to life events such as childbirth, caring for a family member, or challenges due to the pandemic. In addition, the application provides an opportunity to describe other issues which may have impacted professional advancement.

There is an individual in the community who is trying to unfairly discredit my work. Can I be sure that this person will not review my application?
We provide an opportunity to suggest both recommended reviewers and individuals whom you feel should not review your work. In addition, the foundation is committed to ensuring that individuals with conflicts of interest do not provide reviews.

What information will be asked for in the application?
The Pre-proposal Application Guide includes a list of all questions in the pre-proposal application.

Can researchers at liberal arts colleges apply? Our goal is to support researchers who are proposing to do great research in inclusive communities. It is up to the applicant to indicate that they have sufficient time and resources to complete the proposed research. Grant funds can be used to support reductions in (though not elimination of) teaching loads.

I'm in an electrical engineering department. Am I eligible? If the proposed project is experimental physics research, the home department of the research is not considered in the review.